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ABSTRACT

It is argued that students find it difficult to reap the full potential of television case study programs, and find it particularly difficult to integrate this material with the material contained in correspondence texts. The difficulties could be explained by examining more closely the various dimensions of a television case study: didactic--open-ended, structured--unstructured, active--passive, neutral--polemical, and integrated--free-standing. It is suggested that course teams make a conscious decision about what approach to take, determined by the extent to which students have developed prior skills in the use of case study material. The final aim, however, would be to have students able to handle a wide variety of programs, including those which are open-ended, unstructured, polemical, or free-standing. The main academic justification for television case studies could be two-fold, i.e., of intrinsic content value and/or of value in developing learning strategies. Course teams should be more specific and explicit about the justification or purpose of case study programs. It may be necessary to adopt a broad reproduction of general broadcasting styles--a style of production which combines the best of documentary with the best of teaching practice. (VT)

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Improving the Effectiveness of Open University Television Case-Studies and Documentaries

by

Tony Bates and Margaret Gallagher

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WHAT ARE CASE-STUDIES?

The Problem

At the Open University, the use of television for presenting case-studies is very common, and increasing. In 1976, of the 11 new course teams bidding for broadcast resources, five requested television primarily for case-study purposes. Case-studies are most common in courses in Social Sciences, Educational Studies and Technology, but are also sometimes found even in Science and Mathematics courses.

Recently, we have been taking a hard look at this use of television, and our studies have led us to a number of conclusions. The first is that presenting case-studies through television can be an excellent use of the medium, presenting relevant teaching material and valid learning experiences that are difficult to provide in any other way for Open University students. However, in practice it is often exceedingly difficult to realise the potential of such programmes.

There are several reasons for this. The term case-study has been used very loosely to cover a wide range of programme styles, course designs, and teaching functions. It is often used instead of the more accurate and common term, documentary. This loose use of the term "case-study" leads to problems of communication within course teams. Often, it is difficult for an academic to know exactly what a producer means when he talks of making case-study programmes - or a producer may not know what an academic is expecting from a case-study programme, since it can take so many forms. The most serious weakness though of a loose definition is that, although content and style are usually carefully considered, the teaching function of case-studies is rarely discussed, let alone thought through in detail. Sometimes this lack of communication and discussion about the teaching functions of case-studies has led to almost a separate course within a course, with the broadcasts, accompanied by their media handbooks, having only tenuous links with the correspondence texts. Even with mutually designed and carefully planned case-study programmes, many students have found it very difficult to know how to handle television case-studies, or have failed to achieve the more important learning objectives of the programmes.

On the other hand, we consider that case-study programmes provide unique opportunities for developing the higher order learning skills that one would wish to see in "good" University students, and that much could be done to improve their design as teaching instruments, and to improve their use by students.

Although we have serious criticisms to make of current practice, we recognise that using television in this way is breaking new boundaries, both in television production but more particularly in the realm of teaching at a distance. For this reason, then, we believe that there is much more to be learned about how best to use such programmes. Empirical evidence on their effectiveness therefore is crucial. What follows, however, is not so much a resumé of scientifically based research findings - although we do draw on these substantially - but rather an attempt to provide a better basis for discussion within course teams about the function and design of case-study programmes.

Examples of Case-Study Programmes

Our comments are based on several sources of evidence. The most important - in that we are most confident in the validity, reliability and objectivity of the findings - derives from our in-depth evaluations of individual programmes. We have now completed 12 of these. Four programmes have provided us with our main information although some of the other studies are also relevant. We will describe each of these four programmes, as briefly as possible,* for two reasons. Some knowledge of the programmes is necessary to understand the evaluation results. Second, these programmes will serve as examples of what course teams have described as case-study programmes.

One of our first evaluations was of E221, TV3, "The Cumbria Education Committee".[1] E221 is a course about the management and administration of British public education systems. TV3 is directly linked to Unit 6. The whole Unit (including correspondence text) is a case-study of the preparation for local government reorganisation in the new county of Cumbria. The television programme is part of the larger Cumbria case-study, and is an edited recording of the proceedings of an actual meeting of the Cumbria Education Committee.

The programme is introduced by an academic member of the course team, who sets the scene and indicates the areas likely to be discussed in the meeting. While, for the most part, actuality sound for the meeting is used as commentary, there are fairly frequent interjections by the academic, who highlights certain

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*We acknowledge the inadequacy of trying to describe in a few lines of writing a 25 minute television programme. The best remedy for the reader would be to view the programmes and read the related units, but if that is not possible, detailed descriptions of the programmes and their context can be found in the individual evaluation reports.

discussion points and acts as a link from one item to another. The objectives of the programme, set out in the broadcast notes, are primarily to illustrate directly some of the new county's teething problems, to give authentic evidence of decision-making procedures and political activities in Education Committee meetings, and to show students how an Education Committee operates. The broadcast notes were extensive, providing substantial background material on the programme, points to note during the programme, and questions to be answered afterwards. Students were advised to read the Unit and the broadcast notes before viewing the programme.

A second evaluation was of D282, TV4, "The Concept of Full Employment".[2] The aim of D282 is to explain the working of the economy as a whole. TV4 is directly linked to Unit 7, on "Output and Employment". Part of this Unit describes various types of unemployment, and TV4 aims to reinforce students' understanding of these types of unemployment. The programme is based on a case-study of Corby. The programme is presented by the Unit author, and uses interviews, filmed on location in Corby, with employers, a councillor and the local Labour Exchange manager. The programme is interspersed with studio graphics and captions. It is clearly structured, beginning with the presenter in the studio describing - with captions - the various types of unemployment, followed by some brief background information about Corby. The bulk of the programme though uses the interviews to illustrate, sequentially, aspects of each of the three main types of unemployment, related to Corby. At the beginning of each content segment, the presenter introduces the segment, indicating what type of unemployment is to be discussed. There is also a summary by the presenter at the end of each segment and at the end of the whole programme. The broadcast notes are brief, providing a resumé and two diagrams from the programme.

A third evaluation was of D302, TV1, "A Woman's Work"[3]. D302, entitled "Patterns of Inequality", is a third level, full-credit, interdisciplinary course, the emphasis of which is on the structural basis of inequalities and their social and political implications. The written material for the course provides the theoretical framework for the study of inequality.

The sixteen television programmes are documentary case-studies, eight of the usual 25 minute length alternating with eight double-length (50 minute) programmes. Students are warned in the course guide that most of the broadcasts provide primary source material which will require careful analysis and interpretation in relation to concepts and theories introduced elsewhere in the

course materials. TV1 is linked with Section I of the first block of two Units, and is also meant as a stimulative lead-in to questions that will be taken up later in the course. The programme itself is a fifty-minute exploration of one particular form of inequality - that between the sexes. The "case" of sexual inequality is intended to exemplify concepts discussed in Section I of the course, and is designed to provide a range of primary source material relevant to these concepts. The programme uses the role of women in the home and at work to examine conventional assumptions about inequality, to distinguish between inequality and differences, to establish the significance of class in social relationships, and to identify the role of ideology in perpetuating these relationships. The main emphasis is on women's work - part-time and full-time - outside the home, and the programme looks in detail at two industrial settings: a manufacturing industry (the Raleigh bicycle factory) and the film and television industry. The programme as a whole is concerned with raising questions rather than answering them. There is minimal academic commentary. The programme is open-ended, and is considered to be a "resource" programme, in which issues outlined above reappear throughout in different contexts. The Broadcast Handbook for the whole course, as well as pointing out the difference in function between ordinary television documentaries and OU programmes, and urging students to prepare thoroughly and concentrate on the academic analysis of the programme, sets out some of the problems relating to the nature of broadcast "evidence". The TV1 notes, specifying the objectives of the programme, provide a brief summary of the content, and describe the programme's relationship to other parts of the course. They also include a set of extensive study activities, to be undertaken before, during and after the programme. With supplementary reading to accompany the programme, there are 32 printed pages (A4 size) of notes for TV1, of approximately 20,000 words. There is an optional assignment question which it is assumed will require the students to draw extensively on the material presented in TV1.

The fourth evaluation[4] is rather different. This was not of a case-study programme, but of a programme showing students how to handle televised case-study material.

Our earlier studies had suggested some of the problems students might have in using open-ended primary source material on television, and also some of the ways students might be helped. Discussion between the D302 course team and ourselves led to the decision to devote the second TV programme to giving guidance to students on how they could develop skills for the more fruitful use of television on D302. Using extracts from the first programme ("A Woman's Work"), TV2 ("Looking at Inequality") sets out to evoke in students a more

analytic and critical stance in relation to television source material, and to help students to integrate this empirical material with the theoretical matter in the written texts, particularly with regard to the concept of ideology. Selected extracts from TV1 and from two Second World War documentary films on women at work are introduced and analysed in the programme itself and at greater length in the associated broadcast notes.

Evidence from the Evaluations

The method by which these four programmes was evaluated is set out in full in the individual reports. Briefly, it is based on analysis of the course and programme contents, student questionnaire data, and recorded student group discussions. The questionnaires provide both quantitative data (from pre-coded questions) and qualitative data (from open-ended questions). Questionnaire design and the analysis of the data are agreed or cleared with the producer and academic responsible for each programme. Comparatively large samples (between a third and half of all students on a course) and high response rates (usually 75%+, and never below 60%), ensure highly reliable data.

The first point we would make is that each of the three case-study programmes provides material for students which is not available to them from any other source - and it would be extremely difficult to provide such material in any other way in an OU context. Even D282, TV4, which uses case-study material primarily to reinforce concepts already discussed in the correspondence text, adds new material, and in particular indicates the practical difficulties of categorically analysing unemployment according to the various types described in the correspondence text, a problem not discussed in the text itself.

Secondly, it was quite clear from the four studies that many students - even on third-level courses - did not know how to handle case-study material. With both "The Cumbria Education Committee", and "The Concept of Full Employment", one-third of the students did not really understand what the programmes were trying to do, even though academic commentary did provide guidance. With "A Woman's Work", less that one-sixth of the students clearly understood the purpose of the programme. Students found it particularly difficult to see how the programmes illustrated major theoretical concepts. For instance, even after the second programme on D302, which explicitly dealt with the role of television in revealing the impact of ideology on the perception of inequality, only two-fifths of the students understood how the programme material in "A Woman's Work" could be analysed or related to the concepts of ideology, class and social change.

It was also clear from these studies that students found it very difficult to work through the various components of the course in the right order. This is a problem for all programmes, but case-study programmes rely heavily on students reading background material, and being familiar with main concepts or principles, before viewing. On E221, only 12% of the students had thoroughly read the prescribed sections of the correspondence text and broadcast notes before viewing. The comparable figure for D282 TV4 was 34%, and for D302, TV1, 46%. Students generally skim-read the broadcast notes just before viewing, and although the number reading the notes thoroughly beforehand can be increased by clear and precise instructions to do this, (as on D302), there is a limit to how much this aspect of students' behaviour can be modified. Finally, although students will usually read associated material after the programmes, few are willing to undertake other sorts of post-broadcast activities, even when, as was the case in D302, they are directly related to assignments.

The evaluations also show important differences in students' ability to handle broadcast case-study material. It appears that generally the more able students (as measured by end-of-year grades) or more experienced students (in terms of Open University studies) are better able to handle case-study programmes, (as measured by their understanding of the programme's objectives, and their performance on "test" type questions). There is also a relationship between preferred learning styles and ability to handle case-study programmes. In D302, TV1, respondents were classified as "enthusiasts" for open-ended teaching, "guidance-seekers", i.e. those who supported the idea of open-ended teaching, but wanted more guidance in how to handle such material, and "didacticists", i.e. those who wanted much more direct and structured teaching. Students differed in their reaction to and understanding of the programme, according to their preferred style of learning. Similar differences between students were found in the D282, TV4 and the E221, TV3 evaluations.

The fact that many students had difficulty with these programmes did not detract from the students' belief that such programmes could make a valuable contribution to their learning: indeed, we should point out that the majority of students remained unaware of the full extent of their inability to understand the functions of these case-studies. Students on D302 were not opposed to documentary-style case-study programmes in principle, 86% being convinced of the positive contribution that this kind of programme can make to their studies in the Social Sciences. However, students do need much more guidance on how to handle such material. 90% of those who saw D302 TV2 believed that there was a need for at least some programmes on D302 giving guidance on how to use case-study material, and 75% believed that other courses too needed such programmes.

Perhaps of most importance is that the proportion of students who were able to see the links between the first programme and the textual material doubled as a result of watching D302, TV2. It was also clear from the D282 study that D101 was not providing the kind of help that students need in handling case-study programmes.

Perhaps, however, the most fundamental criticism from these evaluations of case-study programmes is their failure to achieve what is, at least implicitly, their most important aim, and their unique potential contribution to Open University teaching. This is to develop the higher order learning skills of application of concepts, problem-solving, analysis of "raw" information, the organisation of learning material, and the ability to take information "on the run", without having to stop and go over it again.

Other Evidence

It is dangerous to generalise from just three or four programmes. It might be thought, for instance, that we may have chosen poor examples of case-study programmes. This, however, is not the case. E221, TV3 and D302, TV1, particularly, were very carefully planned, and there was great concern in all three programmes to ensure that they were integrated with the rest of the course materials. The course teams attempted to provide students with adequate supporting printed materials, or adequate guidance within the programmes, and the programmes were well produced and found interesting by most students.

We can be sure that these programmes were reasonable examples of case-studies, because as well as these four in-depth evaluative studies we have been involved in one way or another with a large number of other case-study programmes. We have completed in-depth evaluations on two other programmes which we think could be considered as case-studies, although they were not designated as such by the course teams. These are S24-, TV7 "Industrial Preparation of Acetic Acid",[5] and E221, Radio 15, "Caught in the Net".[6] In addition, we have collected quantitative data on student responses and examined the design of the programmes, and their relationship with the correspondence texts, for a number of other case-study programmes, or programmes of somewhat similar format (DS261, TV6; DT201, TV7; E351, TV4/5/6; T100, TV26; T241, TV12), even though we have not yet analysed the qualitative data nor written up reports on these programmes. We - or colleagues in our research group - have also worked on a continuing basis in different capacities on several course teams which have used television case-studies. Some of the tasks we have undertaken are as follows: providing broadcast feedback and evaluation data (TD342, D204); observing course design (DT201); unit authors

(DE353, D203); and producing a case-study programme (E352, TV4). In what follows, therefore, we shall be drawing just as much on these experiences as on the four evaluation studies just reported.

What is a Case-Study?

We believe that there is major misunderstanding and confusion within course teams about the meaning of the word "case-study" when applied to television programmes. The term is widely used by BBC (OU) producers and OU academics, without ever having been clearly defined. Not surprisingly then it has been applied to a very wide range of programmes at the Open University. The issue has been further confused by terms such as "primary source material" and "documentary-style" being used apparently interchangeably with "case-study".

We think it would be a futile exercise to try to agree a common use of the term "case-study". Our concern though is that the term "case-study" may sometimes be used as a smokescreen to hide a lack of rigorous thinking about the teaching function or educational objectives of television programmes.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a case-study as follows:

> "an attempt to understand a particular person, institution, society, etc. by assembling information about his or its development."

While this definition would hold for a number of Open University programmes, it does not quite catch the way the term has generally been used. Programmes described as case-studies tend to present concrete examples of behaviour - usually of people and often of machines, or man/machine systems - operating in their "normal" context. Whereas other kinds of programme, and other components of a course - particularly the correspondence texts - tend to be analytic, abstract, and presented in a sequential or linear manner, breaking down the subject matter into "chunks" and into general principles, case-study programmes tend to be concrete and synthetic, anchored in or drawn from the "real world", and reflecting the interrelatedness between various concepts and the complexity of the "real" world.

This is probably as far as we can go with a broad definition which includes most of the current uses of the term. However, this is not much help in communicating what kind of programmes are likely to result, how they will relate to other course materials, or, most important of all, what their role will be

in teaching, other than providing a window on the world. Furthermore, our broad definition begs a number of questions about what we mean by reality, about the way it is presented through television, and about the extent to which television reflects or distorts reality.

We believe then that when course teams are considering whether or not to use a case-study approach for television - or even if they have already decided to do so - as well as considering issues such as the contents of the programmes, they should ask themselves the following questions:

1. What teaching functions do we wish to achieve through the use of television case-studies?
2. What kind of case-study programme is most likely to achieve these teaching functions?
3. What help or guidance will we need to give to students if we are to achieve these teaching functions?

We will look at a number of dimensions which can describe the kind of case-study programme that will be presented. We will then try to show how these dimensions are related to different teaching functions, and what difficulties students are likely to have in learning from such an approach. We will then look at the implications of this analysis for production and utilisation.

DIMENSIONS OF CASE-STUDY PROGRAMMES

Didactic:Open-Ended

Perhaps the most important dimension is one we would describe as "didactic: open-ended". This describes the extent to which the programme material is overtly analysed and/or explained for the student by the academic, or is simply presented to the student, for him to interpret as best he can. For instance, the three case-studies we evaluated would be placed along the dimension as follows:

D282, TV4 provided students with considerable guidance to the analysis of the interview material through the programme commentary. Nevertheless, the students had to listen carefully to what those being interviewed were saying. One could imagine a much more didactic case-study, in engineering perhaps, where a "real" engineering problem or "case" had been examined, and the solution worked through for the student by those who actually solved it, e.g. the design of milk bottles in TS252. E221, TV3, was less didactic than D282, for although pointers were given during the programme to what were considered to be important or significant statements or interactions, the student had to observe what was going on for much of the time and form his or her own conclusions about the "meaning" of what was observed. D302, TV1, gave virtually no guidance to the student in the programme itself, but considerable help was given through the broadcast notes.

Course teams should think very carefully about their teaching aims on the course before deciding on whether case-studies will be didactic or open-ended. The decision should to some extent depend on empirical information. For instance, do students have general analytic skills, or do students have to be taught how to analyse case-study materials? These questions still need to be resolved to some extent, but our research suggests that, even though some of the skills involved may be related to general academic ability, these can certainly be developed by training, as was shown by the better performance of experienced students on D282 TV4 and by the improvement in students' understanding of D302, TV1, after the second programme showed them how to handle such material.

If students do need to develop skills in handling such programmes, it would seem sensible, in the absence of any other information, to assume the need for a steady progression in programmes, from showing students how to organise and analyse case-study material, to gradually withdrawing guidance until the student can handle such material on his own.

It should not be assumed though that one "exposure" to showing how open-ended programme material should be analysed will be sufficient. D302, TV2 failed to help most students to link the programme material of TV1 to the concept of ideology. It may take several programmes where analysis is carried out for the students by the academic before the students really understand how the material is to be approached, and it may take several more exposures to open-ended presentations before the students are able to carry out the analysis for themselves.

For students to be able to handle open-ended programmes, we believe that the course team must be able to specify what the student is supposed to do with the material. We believe that in many cases, neither the producer nor the academic

is clear about what the student should do with the material, or that if they do know, they might at times find themselves unable to do what they expect of the students.

There are several possible teaching functions for open-ended case-studies. The most obvious is to get students to analyse and interpret what they are seeing in terms of concepts and principles learned elsewhere in the course. Another is to present material in terms of a problem, which the student is then asked to solve, also using analytic techniques developed elsewhere in the course. If these are the intended teaching functions though for case-study material, the student must have had the opportunity to learn and become at least familiar with the necessary concepts and principles, before he can analyse the programme material, or solve problems. He must also have all the information, in the programme text or notes, that he needs to carry out such an activity. Furthermore, case-studies are often used because they synthesise or bring together concepts treated separately in the correspondence texts. In such cases, the timing of the broadcasts in relationship to the study of the correspondence texts is crucial. One reason why D302, TV1 was not as successful as it might have been was that the students had not really got started on the course, and therefore were not really familiar with the concepts of ideology and class, which were necessary for them to interpret what they were seeing. In the early part of a course, case-study material needs either a large amount of academic analysis in the programme itself - and even then requires to build on familiar concepts - or the material should be capable of student analysis solely in terms of the few concepts already mastered.

Passive:Active

A second important dimension in case-studies is what we would term the 'passive:active" dimension. In other words, to what extent, and in what ways, is the student expected to respond to case-study programmes? Activity can take a number of forms. Overt activity might include pre-reading of notes before the broadcast, taking notes during the broadcast, or post-broadcast activities. These latter might include further reading, writing self-assessment answers, the written solution of a problem set up in the programme, or even of CMA or TMA questions which can only be answered by viewing the programme. A more subtle overt activity might be the writing of a TMA answer which enables or encourages the student to draw on material presented in a programme, but which could be answered in other ways, as well. Covert activity would include analysis or interpretation of the programme material while watching, or thinking through the relationship between the programme and other parts of the course after watching.

There is overwhelmingly conclusive research evidence, from many studies, that learning takes place more effectively when students make an active response to a programme. Unfortunately, the times at which OU programmes are broadcast, and the similarity in format between OU case-study programmes and general service documentaries, combine to encourage students to take a passive attitude to the broadcasts. For instance, in the case of D302, TV1 the majority of students saw the programme as a source of information rather than - as was intended - as a resource for the development of course skills. This is a particular danger with "open-ended" case-study programmes, which do not provide explicit cues or signposts in the programme itself to how the broadcast material relates to the general aims of a course. We believe that it is a mistake to assume that open-ended programmes will automatically lead to a more active response on the part of the student, than didactic programmes. In fact, the reverse is more likely to be true.

Grahame Thompson deals with this issue from a slightly different perspective when he discusses the problem of "realism" in TV case-studies.

> "The reason for the strength of classical realism is that basically it is 'pleasurable' in a comforting, familiar sort of way (rather like a hot bath) and this is precisely its problem from a teaching point of view. It engenders an unconscious 'relaxation' because it is familiar. It does not 'distance' you from anything but in fact encourages the reverse, an emotional, 'accepting' type of response. The reasons for this are fundamentally the way the 'real' is constituted in these kinds of realist texts. The 'real' is always already pre-given and unproblematic; it is never the result of an articulation, not the result of an intellectual effort but purely the result of an experiential effect. The real world is mirrored as closely as is possible, reflected in the 'eye' of a camera. These kinds of programmes are fascinating and entertaining precisely because they engender a pleasurable effect. The classic realist situations are the 'work' situation and the 'home' situation (mirrored completely in our own case-study situations on most occasions). We are all familiar with these, we 'know' from experience the problems we face in them and hence they really grab us when shown on TV ... These kinds of programmes are ones that do not demand anything of us as viewer and hence that's why they are so popular. They transform nothing but simply reinforce existing experiential notions of what life is really like."[7]

Getting students to respond actively then to such programmes is not an easy task, and the procedures we have adopted so far to get students to "distance" themselves from the material have been exceedingly weak. Most students find it difficult or impractical to take notes during the programmes. The D302 TV1 evaluation showed that while many students did do the extra reading, very few attempted those study activities which required thinking and writing. In particular, students were unable - rather than unwilling - to integrate the programme's empirical content with the related theory and this applied especially to those students - in this case, women - who were most interested and involved in the material dealt with in the broadcast.

Traditionally, case-studies, either directly or on film, have been used in teaching to stimulate discussion, with a teacher present to guide the discussion, and to assist students in their interpretation of case-study material.[8] Our students however are in a totally different situation, and much more thought needs to be given to how students are to be active in response to case-study material. We will return to this point later.

Structure and Format

The internal structure of case-study programmes can vary widely. D282, TV4 had a very simple structure. It had six segments, beginning with a brief description of full and overfull employment and the three types of unemployment, given by the presenter in the studio. This was followed by brief background information about Corby, using location film. Evidence for each of the three types of unemployment in Corby was then illustrated, in sequence, by using extracts from interviews with key people in Corby, ending with a summary by the presenter in the studio.

D302, TV2, however had a much more complex structure. The first five minutes contained "vox pop" statements, film, and advertisements to introduce conventional views about women's role at home. The second section, lasting 17 minutes, contained a collage of film material exploring various aspects of the working situation for women at the Raleigh cycle factory, illustrating the special problems of women part-time workers, the possibility of change through women participating more in union activities, and the question of male domination in the supervisory positions, management and union executives. The third section, lasting 20 minutes, related to women working in the film and television industry. This section drew on a research study carried out for the industry's union on sexual discrimination in the industry. Using film material and a commentary by the woman who carried out the research, the programme focused on factors such as education, job and career

structures, training, social conditioning, role perceptions and general economic structures, as reasons for women's work status and position. The final section of the programme, lasting 7 minutes, and still using film material, briefly mentioned various attempts at reform, such as success and failure in union support, legislation, and job evaluation.

One would obviously expect a broader range of topics to be covered in a 50-minute programme, but we have provided this detailed analysis to show how complex the structure of a programme can be. Although there were four main sections, within each section the number of topics dealt with was very large. The topics were dealt with sequentially, but there were no clear conceptual links between one topic and another, except that they were related to the overall topic of sexual inequality. At the same time, each topic illustrated simultaneously a number of the major concepts, such as ideology and class, without this relationship ever being pointed out in the programme commentary, although the broadcast notes did provide guidance.

The structure of case-study programmes can vary enormously, from a simply story, with a continuous, single, sequential thread, to a collage of unconnected shots, with no underlying rationale for the ordering of these shots apparent to the viewer. Related to this is whether a case-study deals with single or multiple cases: D302, TV1 for instance dealt with two cases, a manufacturing setting (Raleigh) and the film and television industry, whereas E221, TV3 dealt with a single committee meeting.

Another aspect of the structure of a programme - and also related very closely with the "didactic:open-ended" dimension - is the role of commentary and the relationship of commentary to visuals. Very often the structural links are provided by the "academic" commentary, either direct to camera, or, more often, by voice over film. Commentary is not necessarily needed to provide structure, however. DT201, TV7, "Chicago: A Day in the Central Business District", used no academic commentary, the structure being provided by the ordering of the shots, following both a chronological pattern (beginning in the morning, and showing the "use" of the central business sector at various times of the day, ending with a late-night shot) and a geographical ordering (moving in from the outer suburbs, by various transport means, to the central business sector).

Whether or not a simple structure is required, and whether or not a commentary should provide that structure, ought to depend once again on pedagogic issues, as well as production considerations. It may be the intention of a course team to provide students with a programme whose structure is complex, because the students are required to try and sort out the issues, and to themselves impose some sort of

structure on what they are seeing. However, we are frankly sceptical that this is the real - or at least the original - intention in many case-studies with complex structures (and if it is, it is a very ambitious one). A complex structure is more likely to derive, in our experience, from uncertainty on the academic's part as to what material is required or will be collected during the process of filming in order to fulfill the programme's teaching function, or to derive from the artistic and technical considerations of the producer and film editor.

If we consider the context in which our students view - often at very difficult times, seeing the programme once only, over a 25 minute period, as a small part of their overall learning package - it would seem obvious that the structure and format of a case-study programme should as far as possible reinforce rather than detract from the educational aims of the programme. A complex structure, involving juxtaposition of shots, sometimes out of sequence, and abrupt changes in theme, can be a useful device in general documentary programmes for maintaining interest and stimulating the viewer. The use of such techniques in Open University programmes however shows a misunderstanding of the target audience. In most cases, Open University students are already motivated to watch. They want primarily to be instructed, not entertained. If they perceive the material as relevant to their studies, they will try to concentrate. We have found that even with simple structures - as in D282, TV4 - changes in various presentation formats (captions, maps, location film, presenter in studio, interviews) can provide variety and stimulus, but can also mask the conceptual structure. Learning through television is not a simple process. Even with a strong, clear "story-line", students will still need to understand the relationship between what they are seeing in terms of the more abstract concepts they are studying in their texts, and so it will not help if students are baffled by the structure or internal logic of a programme.

It seems to us then that learning will be aided, if, when making case-study programmes, the structure of the programme is kept as simple as possible, if strong story lines are chosen, rather than a collage of unrelated events, if single cases are chosen rather than multiple cases, and if one theme is pursued in depth, rather than a number of themes superficially.

Integration

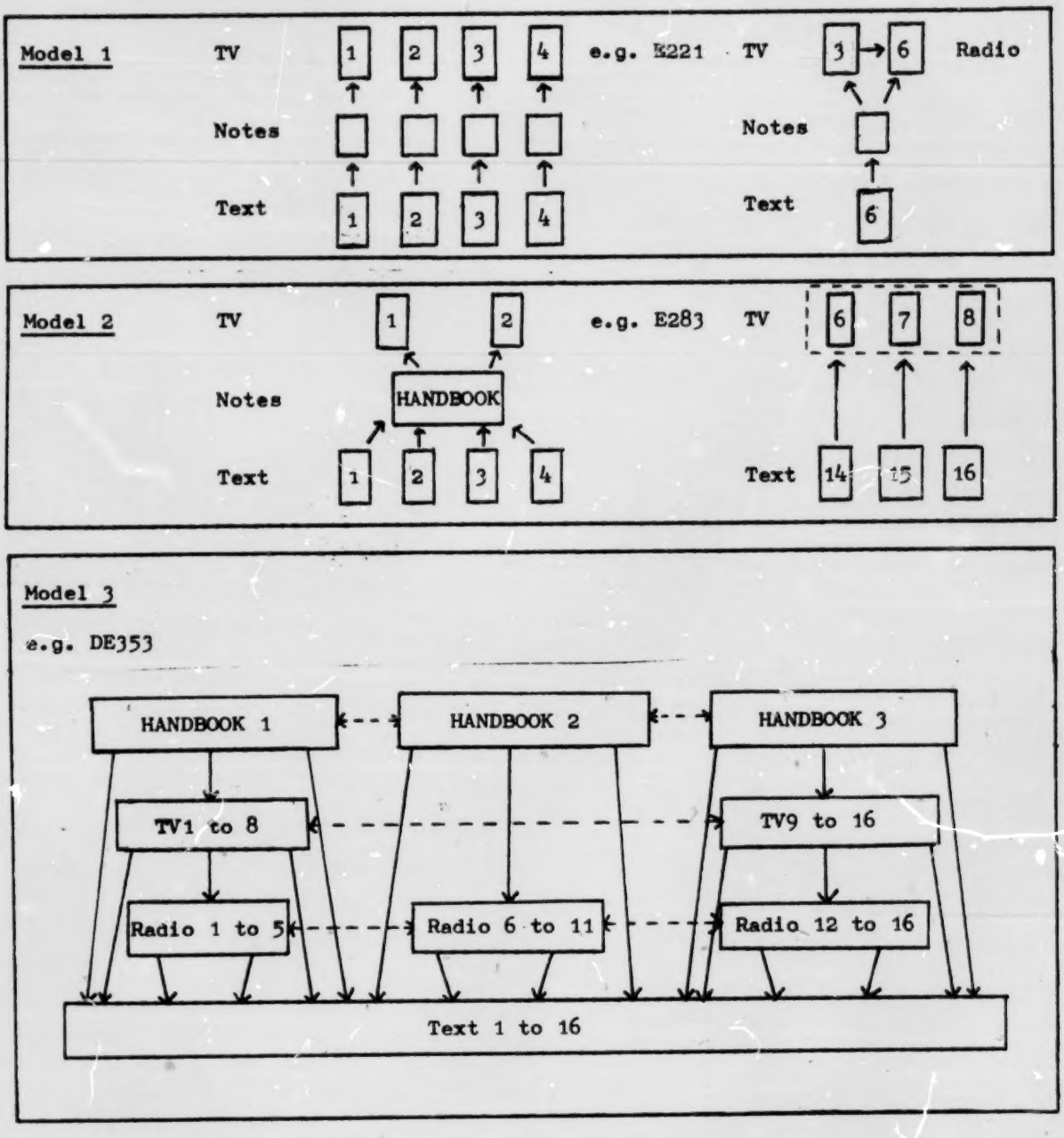
Integration is another word much used in the Open University, but one which has never been clearly defined or understood. The question of integration appears very early in course design. Should programmes be linked to one another? Should we carve out a special area for broadcasting, in parallel to the texts?

Should we have a set of media booklets, as well as the texts? Much of the discussion about integration centres on these organisational questions. In what order should students work through the different media? Should broadcasting be a "free-standing" component or not? How can we organise the teaching material so that integration is helped?

Integration can vary along the organisational dimension, from tightly integrated - with text, broadcasts and notes all directly related to one another, and to be worked through in a certain order for fullest understanding - to an almost free-standing component, with very tenuous links between broadcasts and texts in any one week's work. E221 TV3, ("Cumbria Case-Study") is a good example of tight organisational integration. Here the relationship between the text, programme and programme notes had been carefully thought out, and students were recommended to work through the media in a particular order (read text, read broadcast notes, see TV, listen to radio, read notes again). Unfortunately, students found it difficult to work through the materials in the recommended order. Because of marked differences in individual work-patterns, and because of a general difficulty for most students in working to a tightly preordained pattern, close organisational integration is in practice very difficult to achieve.

For this and other reasons - for instance, because there are fewer broadcasts than units - it has become more typical for course teams to opt for relatively free-standing media components, with the linking or integration assisted by specially written media handbooks. In some cases, the media booklet and three or four programmes relate primarily to certain texts being studied more or less at the same time (e.g. E283, TV6, 7 and 8, and texts 14-17). In most cases however - DT201, DT352, DE353 - there may be little or no direct connection at all between the programmes and the units being studied at the time of viewing. Figure 1 illustrates various models of organisational integration.

Figure 1. Various models of organisational integration



Model 3 is very complex and increasingly commonly used. In such a model, students' perceptions may well be that they are in effect studying two mini-courses in parallel - the media component and the correspondence texts. For instance, in DE353 there are three distinct broadcasting case-studies - dealing with television and politics, the making of a feature film, and black music. Each of these relates in a general conceptual sense to the issues of the course as a whole, but not in terms of any chronology imposed by the themes of the correspondence texts being studied at the time of programme transmissions. So while the early broadcasts are dealing with television coverage of political conventions and conferences in the U.S.A. and in Britain, the first written units are concerned with the history of the mass media, theories of mass society and of culture, and the role of the media in the developing world. When this sort of model is used, it is likely to be only towards the end of the course that the various conceptual strands can be pulled together by students.

Does this matter? It may not, if the case-study materials are in themselves considered to be as important as the theoretical or analytical concepts being covered in the texts. McCormick[9] makes the point that for many technologists, case-studies are what technology is all about, implying that the importance of the "case" itself is the determining factor for what to teach, and how to approach it. For instance, it can be argued that in a course about "Mass Communication and Society" it is as important for students to observe and be aware of the simple technical and logistic constraints on programme production (clearly illustrated by the "politics" case-study in its own right) as it is that they should examine "evidence" of the role of ideology and the "filtering" processes used by media professionals in structuring programme content (an aspect of the "politics" material which would only become fully clear in relation to study of later correspondence texts). The first approach emphasises observation of the event itself and its phenomenological characteristics, the second stresses analysis of the event and its underlying structure.

We are not arguing that one or other approach is right or best. It may be possible for both approaches to exist side by side. Students however should know whether they are expected to treat each of the media components separately, or whether they are meant to integrate the two components. They should also know where lies the emphasis in the course: on the case-study material itself, or on the underlying theoretical concepts. It is important too for a course team to recognise when such a split in approach exists within a course and to agree to it. In any case, it should not normally be difficult for case-study programmes to be filmed and edited so that they not only tell a story - "this is what happens" - but also be structured in such a way that the analysis of why it is happening can

also be carried out by the student. Undue emphasis however on the "event" can make it very difficult for students to know how they should approach the television material other than to recall it in their own words at a later date. Model 3, we contend, indicates a major problem for students in integrating case-study programmes. As we have already indicated, television programmes tend to synthesise a whole range of concepts simultaneously. Academic analysis however tends to be linear or sequential. It may be difficult then for students to integrate case-study programmes, if they have not covered the necessary reading for analysis or interpretation.

It should be clear from our analysis that there is a limit to how far the organisation of materials can aid the integration of case-study programmes. Media handbooks, careful scheduling and ordering of material can all help but they cannot overcome the impossibility of integration if broadcasting and texts are allowed to develop independently, and are allowed to adopt entirely different approaches to content. There is a great temptation for this to occur, however, because it does allow producers to get on with the job, and to concentrate on making "good" television and radio programmes, unencumbered by academics who may not have clear ideas themselves about what should be in the programmes; it also allows academics to get on with the writing of texts, unencumbered by the need to pay much attention to the demands of broadcast production (particularly if one or two other academics on the team can be given "responsibility" for broadcasting).

We believe then that the original concept of text and broadcast developing simultaneously is still, by and large, the most appropriate, even - or especially - for case-study programmes. We believe that students must have the means by which to tackle broadcast-related material at the time of the broadcast - because of its ephemeral nature - and that the texts must therefore take account of the broadcast material. We believe that the concept of the media booklet, while having some advantage, can in fact make integration more rather than less difficult, by "freeing" the texts of the need to accommodate the analysis and interpretation of the case-study material contained in the broadcasts. Indeed, we believe that avoiding media booklets in course design would in many cases strengthen the texts, if it forced the course team to make the texts more related to "real" rather than hypothetical events, by reference to the programme material.

The implication of developing texts and broadcasts together for case-studies is that programmes would have to be filmed and edited in most cases before the writing of the second draft of the correspondence text, and certainly before the third draft. The text would deal both with analytic concepts and with pointers to an analysis of the programme material. This means early preparation for case-study programmes, with all that this implies for the scheduling of course design. It

also means a very close involvement of the academics with the programme, at all stages. We will pick up these points later, when we discuss production implications in more detail.

Finally, the idea of separate assessment of broadcast case-study material is nonsensical if a course has conceptually integrated the broadcasts and the texts. Separate assessment of broadcast case-study material can be justified only if the events portrayed in the broadcasts are not described and analysed elsewhere in the course, and if these uniquely recorded events and their analysis are considered by the course team to be as important, in their own right, as any other theoretical and conceptual ideas contained elsewhere in the course. In such a situation, though, there could be little relationship between texts and broadcasts, and students would truly be studying two separate courses.*

Once again, we wish to stress that we are not arguing that one should never have a free-standing broadcast component, or separate media handbooks, and so on. If, however, the aims are an integrated course, and the development of intellectual skills in analysing case-study programmes and applying academic concepts to such programmes, then texts and broadcasts ought to be developed together, rather than separately.

Ideology, Neutrality, and Truth

The fifth dimension we wish to discuss is one we would term as "polemical: neutral". Should a case-study programme take a stance, should it be committed towards a particular argument or viewpoint, or should it be neutral, objective, balanced, present all sides of an argument, etc.? This of course is a very contentious issue, and one which is central to the role of both broadcasting and education. We realise that this involves more than just educational arguments, especially for the BBC, and it is an issue which has been discussed in its broader aspects by a number of commentators.[12,13] We wish here though to deal specifically with the educational problems involved, realising that in some cases our conclusions may run counter to current BBC management views.

Our basic standpoint is that it is impossible to portray, through a 25 minute television case-study programme, a truly objective view of the world. It must be a selective and edited view of reality, and hence represent the ideology or viewpoints of those responsible for making the programme. We believe this statement to be true, even for scientific or technological case-studies, since at

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*See papers by Kern[10] and Pentz[11] for a fuller discussion of this issue.

most they represent only a set of "best" solutions to particular problems, in the light of current knowledge. (The fact that a certain viewpoint or ideology has widespread public or academic acceptance does not alter the fact that it is still a viewpoint.)

Secondly, teachers are generally as concerned with establishing ways of thinking, as with presenting just "facts" or "theories". Thus, a teacher is often as concerned with what establishes the validity of an argument, or viewpoint, as with the argument itself. To give an example, one of the major aims of D302, TV1 was not to prove that women are unequally treated at work - this was almost taken for granted - but to point towards explanations and an understanding of this phenomenon. A case-study programme therefore often plays a dual role: it sets out to help students to analyse or explain phenomena or solve problems; and it provides evidence itself in support of arguments or theories. D302, TV1 is an interesting example of this, since by making no real attempt to examine or destroy the argument that women are not treated unequally, it acted as evidence for the fact that women are treated unequally.

Much of the teaching in conventional Universities is concerned with developing in students a critical approach to reading. Television though is just as susceptible as print to bias, to the use of illogical arguments, to the presentation of unreliable information, or to the power of emotional persuasion. It can be argued that because of its public nature, television is a good deal more susceptible to social and cultural influences. Despite the BBC's code of ethics and guidelines regarding objectivity and lack of bias in programmes, and no matter what safeguards are built into monitoring them, programmes will inevitably reflect the standards and value-systems of those responsible for their production. We believe, therefore, that it is the responsibility of the University to develop in students a critical approach to television, when this is used as a major source of academic evidence and argument, as it is with case-study material.

However, the skills that one hopes the University is developing in students for critical reading are not in all cases directly applicable to the critical viewing of educational television programmes. Television has its own unique ways of supporting or attacking arguments or viewpoints, of choosing and presenting evidence, of manipulating the feelings and emotions of viewers. Although television is no less valid than print as a teaching medium, its techniques and characteristics are different. We believe that students should be aware of these techniques and characteristics, and specifically taught to deal with them.

Some of the features unique to television (or film) that can be - and are - used to influence the viewers' acceptance of an argument are purely presentational, and spring from the formal conventions of film or television production. As Dai Vaughan, an editor of television documentary films, puts it:

> "If we switch on our sets and see someone addressing us directly, we know he is a narrator or presenter. If his gaze is directed slightly off-camera, we know he is an interviewee, a talking head. If he is turned away from us by an angle of more than about 15°, he is part of an action sequence. It is clear that there is a hierarchy of authority implicit in this code. The talking head [interviewee] is permitted to gaze into the sacred sector only through the priest-like intercession of the interviewer ... Thus the function of a presenter introducing a documentary ... is to diminish the authority of the people filmed and to posit the film itself, in contrast to the pro-filmic reality, as the object of scrutiny."[14]

Baggaley and Duck[15] have shown empirically that viewers' perceptions of the reliability and credibility of television presenters are influenced by a whole range of presentation factors. We believe students need to be aware of how these conventions might influence their perception, when case-study programmes are being used to present a view of reality.

We believe that it is relatively easy to raise students' level of sophistication regarding the influence of presentation factors. It would seem to be much more difficult to develop an awareness in students of the influence of several more fundamental factors that arise when television is being used to provide evidence of the "real" world. We will choose just four aspects, as examples.

First of all, there is the editorial process. Reducing an "event" or information about a topic to less than 25 minutes inevitably leads to a process of selection and condensation. The problem for the student is that he is not a party to this process, but merely sees the end result. For instance, we have quoted an extract from Vaughan's pamphlet. If readers feel we have misquoted him, they can go to the pamphlet and check that we have not quoted him out of context. This process of validating evidence is not open to the television viewer, for not only is the information transient, but the source of the

information is inaccessible. The standard defence against misrepresentation is accuracy in the editing process, but even the most careful producer will interpret events as he sees them, and even the most careful juxtaposition of film sequences can have unforeseen and unintended consequences. To quote Vaughan again:

> "Even the talking head is not immune from the use of techniques which will rob it of its proper significance ... First of all, the exclusion of hesitancies and qualifications diminishes the personality of the speaker in favour of the abstract content of his words. These will then be organised into a structure which was not the structure of his discourse; and the steps of his argument will be used to lead, not to his own conclusion, but to a conclusion with which he may not even agree. Early in my career I was told, 'You'll have to put this man in, to ensure a fair balance of opinion. If you don't like what he says, you can always cut to a wall being knocked down.' What we see here, both with the talking head and with the wall, is their reduction towards the symbolic through submission to a syntax not of their own generation. ... I was recently shown a rough cut of a film in which someone saying 'The man's a fascist' led directly into a talking head of a government minister. When I commented that this seemed a disagreeably snide way of suggesting the minister was a fascist, the director replied that he had not noticed, still less intended, the implication. The implication could, nonetheless, be construed upon the cut ... "[14]

These comments were made, not in the context of Open University programmes, but of general service documentaries. Yet the BBC guidelines for general documentaries are firm and clearcut. To quote from Cawston et alia:

> "The BBC is formally required to refrain from expressing its own opinion on current affairs or matters of public policy. Also, its own code of practice developed over the years - in recognition of the powerful position it occupies - demand that its programmes should be fair and without bias, and that those who produce programmes should never abuse their position for purposes of propaganda or the expression of personal commitment."[11]

Yet as we have seen, "reality" can be seriously distorted. The BBC itself recognises that this is unavoidable, for, quoting Cawston et alia again:

> "It has often been claimed that there is no such thing as an objective documentary. Because it is the work of human beings, the argument goes, it must be subjective. The answer is that it is the production intention that is important. One cannot ask more than that the intention should be correct, and that its execution should be carried out with the maximum of skill and with a proper application of the various responsibilities outlined [earlier]."[12]

In an academic context, however, intention is not enough. It would be absurd to judge the "truth" of a scientific paper solely by the intentions of its author. As Thompson[7] puts it:

> "Any ideological framework is represented in the structure of the programme itself, in its various narratives and their combination. This may actually be entirely different to what was intended or even what was thought was being done by the author. It seems to me that this is the only way in which any text can be read, to try and discern what is actually 'foregrounded' and not what is 'backgrounded', what is actually present and its articulation and not what its 'origins' were."

When Open University programmes are using television material as "evidence" of the real world, the student must be equipped to judge the context in which the evidence has been chosen and put together, even taking for granted the good intentions of the producer and academic. This means revealing much more about how the programme is assembled. For instance, it is common practice to edit out an interviewer's questions, but to include the interviewee's responses, as if these were spontaneous statements. Yet questions structure the nature of the response, and can completely alter the emphasis an interviewee might give to a point. In D302, TV1, for instance, the women at the bicycle factory were asked by the interviewer (who was never shown) about the need for a women's union. The question was not included in the programme. The response to the suggestion was enthusiastic - "A good idea" - until someone said, "Well, why don't we do something about it?" At this point, another of the women said, "Well, we've only just thought about it, haven't we?" Students however are not usually given such clues as to the influence of an unseen interviewer in evoking such a response.

A second factor which constitutes a problem in using television to provide evidence of "reality" is the difficulty of getting case-study material which illustrates the points the academic wants to make. The "real" world is usually not so tidy as the academic world. Practical difficulties - like the intrusive presence of a camera crew on mother-child relationships - may frustrate the most carefully prepared plans. The evidence which the academic "knows" exists may not be captured by the cameras, because the circumstances are just not right at the time of filming. To be frank, there are also occasions - particularly in Social Sciences and Educational Studies - when the academic theories do not hold up well in the real world. We know of at least one case where, after 50 hours of sound recording, in a wide range of school settings, no examples were discovered of a particular form of teacher-pupil interaction described in the correspondence text. The thought did cross our minds that such an interaction just did not occur in "real" life. On another occasion, a producer was asked by an external consultant to completely change or withdraw a previously made programme - already approved by the course team - because it completely contradicted the theoretical position being taken in the consultant's text. The film was about the events in two people's lives. Both the main participants believed the programme was an accurate account of what had happened to them. Could it have been the theory that was at fault? In such circumstances, should "evidence" contradictory to such a theory be suppressed? It is interesting to note that in the first case, students were unaware of the problem of finding such evidence of classroom behaviour and that in the second case, the students were asked in the broadcast notes if <u>they</u> could perceive or resolve the contradiction between programme and text.

Thus the question of what <u>does</u> constitute "evidence" in case-study material is not a simple matter. It is all the more important then that the academic in particular is clear in his own mind about the way students are to use the "evidence" contained in case-study programmes. It seems to us that there is often considerable confusion about this. Are the students meant to question the nature of the television evidence itself - to ask themselves why this was chosen, whether the information could have been presented in other ways, and so on? Or are they to take the evidence as given, and to see how well this evidence supports or challenges concepts or theories in the text? Or is the "evidence" meant as no more than illustration or examples of concepts or principles contained in the texts? Where does the academic emphasis lie - on the "evidence", on the principles or concepts, or on the application of those principles and concepts to the evidence?

The student is faced with a third problem in evaluating television evidence, caused by having to deal simultaneously with two channels of communication: vision and sound. We have noticed for instance that in many case-study programmes,

the sound track provides the main source of "academic" information. This is particularly true when interviews are heavily used. This applies for instance to D282, TV4, where nearly all the conceptual and factual information is conveyed by the sound track. It is therefore important that the visual component reinforces or matches the sound track.

We have noticed though that visuals, although illustrating the content area, do not necessarily reinforce the "argument" on the sound track. For instance, it is common practice to cut from a picture of a person being interviewed to a location film shot, with the interviewee's voice continuing over the shot, as if explaining the shot. However, the same film could often be used to "illustrate" almost the opposite point, if there was a different commentary provided. For instance, film of the courting behaviour of sticklebacks was used in a "Horizon" programme on the theory of the "selfish" gene. The main elaboration of the theory was contained in the sound commentary, with filmed examples of animal behaviour being used as illustration. But illustration of what? The use of such film was perfectly justifiable as an illustration of the type of behaviour which the theory was attempting to explain, but the way the programme was constructed was likely to result in most viewers perceiving the visuals as validating the theory. However, compare this with the use of film of stickleback behaviour on SDT286, TV14. In this programme, the film was used to make the point that certain behaviour patterns in sticklebacks (and some other creatures, such as grey-leg geese) are automatically and invariably triggered by specific stimuli. Students observed these stimuli being varied, and observed the direct effect of this on the creatures. Thus the visuals were being used as "evidence" in a more restricted, and, we believe, more justifiable way, than on the Horizon programme. Thus similar film can be used in entirely different ways, depending on the way the commentary is written, and the student needs to be very sophisticated in his use of television, and already very knowledgeable in the subject area, to be able to differentiate such differences.

Finally, the power of television to influence viewers subjectively, and hence to validate or refute arguments through reference to primarily emotional bases, is a subject of some controversy. However, there was clear evidence from the D302, TV1 evaluation that students can react emotionally to a programme, and that this can have a negative influence on their capacity to deal analytically with the material. For instance, women expressed stronger feelings about the content of D302, TV1 than men, but were less able, on average, than men in recognising the function of the programme, and in analysing it in the way the course team wanted. Course teams need to be clear then as to what is more important - an affective or strong emotional reaction to a programme, or a cool intellectual analysis of the material - since the two reactions are not necessarily compatible.

We have spelled out in some detail some of the implications of using case-study material as sources of evidence, and some of the difficulties students face in dealing with such material. It was very clear from the D302, TV2 evaluation that many students wanted more help and guidance in dealing with case-study material. Students have been brought up by and large to believe in the special claims to impartiality and objectivity in BBC broadcasts. We are not concerned here with whether or not this claim is justified regarding the general broadcasting service. We are arguing though that when, in an Open University programme, students are required to analyse case-study material, they will need an approach which is radically different from their "feet up and watch telly" attitude towards general service documentaries.

We believe then that the first priority in case-study programmes is for the academics to be clear, before the course goes out to students, as to the main educational functions to be played by the case-study material. The second priority is to ensure that students are able to - or are gradually shown how to - analyse the material in the way intended. If the course team can satisfy these conditions, we see no <u>educational</u> reason why programmes should not be as polemical as the course team wants. Indeed, as we said earlier, we believe it is impossible to produce an academically "neutral" case-study, nor does this matter, so long as certain guidelines or criteria are met. These would include accurate "labelling" of the programme, so that it is clear that it reflects the viewpoints of its makers, and a method of production which enables the student to assess the reliability and validity of the evidence being presented to him. (<u>How</u> this could be done we will discuss later.)

We believe in fact that it would often be both more honest and more educationally fruitful for a programme to take a clear stance regarding a subject, one which the student can recognise immediately, than to hide an ideology or viewpoint behind a contrived mask of neutrality. If this view could be accepted, it would enable course teams to consider a much broader range of roles for case-study material. Barnouw,[16] in his history of the non-fiction film, classifies seminal documentary films under a variety of descriptive roles: prophet, explorer, reporter, poet, advocate, prosecutor, promoter, observer, catalyst, guerilla, etc. There will be many occasions when case-studies will be nearer to the observer, reporter, explorer, catalyst end of the dimension. But there may be occasions when a course team wishes to use the advocate, prosecutor, promoter roles as specific teaching devices.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRODUCTION AND UTILISATION

Limitations of an Analytic Approach

We are aware that the analytic approach to case-study materials we have just described does not reflect the way programmes are actually made. We accept that it is not always practical to design the production of a programme strictly on the basis of a prior analytical approach to a subject or method of teaching.

What should be done then in practical terms to make better use of case-study material? Many of the things we are about to propose -- or have already proposed - have been done by some course teams, by some producers, by some academics. Also, we believe it is more important for course designers to be aware of the problems rather than to apply mechanically a set of "procedures" offered from other sources. Nevertheless, we believe that there are certain steps that could be taken to improve the use of case-study material on television.

Academic Guidelines for Production

The first priority is for clear academic guidelines to be agreed by the course team for each programme before any shooting or editing begins. We recognise that these guidelines may have to be modified as a result of what happens on location or when the "rushes" of the film material are seen. In this case, the modified guidelines should influence the editing. Wherever possible the text, and if not the text, the broadcast notes, should make it clear how the television material is to be used by students. We believe that the academic guidelines from the beginning should reflect how the programmes are to be used by students in their studies. Ideas about utilisation should be modified and developed through the whole process of production.

We recognise that for many programmes there is a danger in being too precise about how students are expected to use the material, Individual students will react in different ways and one of the advantages of case-study materials is that they allow for different kinds of responses from different students. Even so, this does not absolve the producer and academic from thinking through various ways in which the material could be validly used. We believe that for every case-study programme, the programme designers should ask themselves the question, "If I was a student, how would I use the material?"

From our experience, this question would present considerable difficulties, even for the producer and academic, in many case-study programmes. It will be much more difficult for the average student who is likely to see the programme only once, usually at an inconvenient time (early morning or early evening) when immediate follow-up is not possible. He will not have thoroughly studied the associated reading and he may still be struggling to understand the main concepts in the course. In the past, where there has been careful consideration of student utilisation, this has often been after the programme has been completed, and it has been left to the broadcast notes to try and point the student in the right direction. In essence, we are saying that not enough consideration is given, before or during the production process, to the programmes being a device for teaching.

We think there are two reasons for this. The first is to do with what we would call "professionalism" in television production - what producers believe makes a "good" television programme. The striking thing about many of our case-study programmes is how strongly they resemble, in quality, style and content, documentary programmes on the general service - "Horizon", "Man Alive", and "World in Action". The advantages to the University of this professionalism are obvious - extremely high standards in all aspects of programme production. But for the Open University, this "super-professionalism" can have some disadvantages, if it is not properly controlled. For a start, a case-study is not necessarily the same as a documentary. Moreover, the concentration on production standards emphasises the product - the programme itself - while the process which it is supposed to be assisting, the learning process, risks being ignored. Frankly, we would be surprised if students pick up even 30% of the content of most case-study programmes, and we have seen that students - even at third level - have great difficulty in using case-studies to develop the higher level skills of applying concepts to or analysing the television material.

Secondly, we believe that too often academics have been rather passive observers during the production process. There are, of course, good reasons why academics have often not been more involved. They themselves have not been too sure of what a case-study programme is, they have other aspects of the course to think about as well as broadcasting, and, until very recently, nobody realised that there might be student difficulties in using such programmes as a learning experience. We have all been somewhat deceived by students' enthusiasm for such programmes. But we believe that the teaching function of a case-study programme - the way the material is to be used, the intellectual skills to be developed, and the way the programme structures knowledge - should be very carefully thought out by the academics from the beginning. Too often, it is only the content of the

production, and possibly the location of filming that is discussed in advance of shooting.

As well as considering the intellectual activities to be carried out by students - analysis, interpretation, application, etc. - the course team should discuss the strategy for developing skills of analysis, such as the need to move from didactic to more open-ended programmes as the course progresses. Individual unit authors should check that students will have already covered in the texts the necessary concepts for analysis before the programme is broadcast. If important concepts have not been covered at the time of transmission the unit author will need to decide whether to explain these concepts to students during the programme itself, or whether to use the notes or "advance" references to texts to provide the necessary conceptual context.

The Need for Guidance WITHIN Programmes

Because of what we know of how our students study, and because of the ephemeral nature of the programmes, we believe that at least in the early part of a course, as much as possible of the "teaching" aspect should be carried in the programmes themselves with the notes used strictly as back-up materials. We think it is unrealistic to expect students to analyse a programme in great depth after they have seen it. It may be several weeks after they have seen the programme before they can tackle the broadcast notes, and even a couple of hours after viewing it may be very difficult to recall the programme with any accuracy or in detail.

For this reason, we believe that there should be more academic "intervention" in case-study programmes - pointing out on the commentary in advance of a film sequence what to look for, guiding students during a sequence (by caption or voice-over), or, perhaps most effectively of all, by breaking into the flow, and repeating a film sequence, with this time an academic analysis in the commentary. Deliberately building in active responses to programme material during the programme can also be most effective as a teaching device.* The more difficult the concepts or the more complex the relationship between concepts being covered by the film material, the greater the need for intervention.

Original or Archive Film?

We think much more consideration should be given, for academic reasons, to

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*See for instance evaluation of D101, TV7[17] and E283, TV4 and 5[18].

the use of existing archive film, rather than for original shooting (especially where original shooting requires overseas locations).

Using existing film gives the academic much more freedom to select and decide on the composition of case-study material. He can see at an early stage of production design what the student will be seeing, and can see how it could be used to develop the intellectual skills required of students. With original shooting, it is not until the rushes are shown that an academic can judge the appropriateness of the material, even though he may have been "there" when the film was shot. If the shooting has involved expensive travel arrangements and a high budget, there is an obligation to use such material, even if it is not quite appropriate.

A major academic disadvantage in using overseas material, particularly when originally shot, for case-studies is that very often the cultural context is essential to an understanding of the content. When this context is foreign to the viewer valuable television time must be given over to explaining it, or extensive reading has to be provided on the subject, thus increasing the students' work-load. Also, since the academic and the producer are likely to be steeped in the cultural aspects, having spent some considerable time on location collecting the material, and even longer examining the material during the editing process, they are likely to take for granted - and hence overestimate - the students' knowledge of the cultural context. With material shot nearer at home, this is less likely to happen.

One reason for original filming being carried out so much is the time required to locate and view existing films, much of which will turn out to be "inappropriate". This previewing is usually done by the BBC producers, and given their programme production load, their time for such viewing - and for getting and locating appropriate film quickly enough - is severely limited. However, once a course team has discussed in the early stages how case-study material is to be used in principle, it may well be worth the academics themselves previewing as much existing material as possible for the whole course, before deciding to go for original shooting. Previewing existing material will also help clarify how such material ought to be used by students, and thus help define more clearly the function of case-study programmes.

Editing

This is perhaps the most sensitive area of all regarding case-study materials. The editing of film material is perhaps the most important part of a case-study

programme, for the editing provides the "internal logic" of the programme, yet the editor sees only a part of the teaching process. Good communication between academic and editor is crucial. (For professional reasons, this communication is channelled through the producer.) We believe that academics should spend much more time than has been customary in talking directly to editors about what they want. It is often only at the editing stage that an academic can see what shape the programme is beginning to take, and how the isolated sequences he may have seen in the rushes begin to hang together. It is at this stage that much of the "meaning" in a programme becomes developed. For case-study programmes, then, the editing is crucial.

For this reason, we believe that producer, editor and academic must go through the rushes together, discussing what sections are required, and in what order and sequence, before editing begins. At this meeting, the academic should be able to explain to the editor - directly - how he sees the material being used by students, and the extent to which the academic wishes to guide students in the programme itself. This will determine to some extent the pace, the length of shot, and the use of commentary, as well as the structure of the programme. We also believe that the academic should be able to see the final editing (before dubbing) and one additional day's editing time should always be available to accommodate any changes the academic may require.

It is easy for course teams to be faced with a fait accompli regarding case-study programmes. Often this is because the academic has not involved himself enough in the programme. At times, however, academics have not been encouraged to involve themselves.

We are arguing for close academic involvement in the editing of case-study material, because this is necessary if the television material is to be used effectively for the transference of knowledge to students. The academics must be totally familiar with the television material, so that it can be structured in the most appropriate way, and so that the accompanying written material (either the text or notes) relates as closely as possible to it.

Utilisation

Although we believe that the main emphasis on improving the effectiveness of case-study programmes should centre on the design of the programmes themselves, there is much that can be done outside of the programme. We shall concentrate on three issues: broadcast notes, special programmes, and tutoring.

We have earlier discussed the need for separate media handbooks. Whatever a course team decides on this issue, it is almost certain that some distinct broadcast notes will be necessary. Students find it difficult in practice to read broadcast notes thoroughly before a programme - the majority tend to skim through them a few minutes before the programme begins. If extensive reading is needed before viewing - as it ought to be for most case-study programmes - this should be in the texts and scheduled for work some weeks in advance. Pre-broadcast notes should therefore be short, and should provide an appropriate frame of reference from which the students can approach the programme. One useful technique for pre-broadcast notes is to include one very short paragraph describing the context of the programme, plus three or four key questions or points to be borne in mind while viewing. (Our evaluations have shown that this is about the maximum number of points a student can hold in mind at one time while viewing.) Our evaluations have also consistently shown that most students find it difficult to take notes during a television programme, so the notes should contain - as post-broadcast reading - a summary of the key points, important points of detail, and visual reminders (photographs, graphs).

As we have already mentioned, it can be difficult to get students to carry out post-broadcast activities satisfactorily. Students tend to prefer follow-up reading. We found on one Mathematics course (MST282) that students were more likely to carry out programme-related activities when they were included in the text than when they were included in the notes. We have already set out our doubts on the use of CMAs or TMAs to encourage post-broadcast activities, and in any case students have increasing difficulties in getting access to programmes. Course team may like to consider though the possibility of non-assessed post-broadcast activities, on which tutors can comment.

It may be useful for the broadcast notes to give some account of how the programme was made, and what producer and academic were trying to do - almost a self-critique of the programme - so that students are better placed to treat the material as evidence. Certainly, there should be some explicit cross-referencing in the notes to related written sections of the course (unless this is done in the text itself), with some discussion of how the textual material can be used to explain or interpret the broadcast material.

At least two course teams (D203 and D302) have made special programmes, showing students how to analyse programme material.

It was clear from the D302 evaluation that such programmes are very much welcomed by students. In particular, the majority of students realised as a

result of viewing D302, TV2, the need to take a more analytic stance towards televised resource material. D302 students claimed that such a programme would have been welcomed on most courses. It must also be remembered that the students questioned were experienced Open University Social Science students, many were in their sixth year, and some on their twelfth course.

Without doubt, then, programmes which analyse a previous programme in the course can be extremely valuable in developing students' skills in handling case-study materials. There are however several limitations. For a start, there is a limit to the number of such programmes that one would want to make. It would probably be impractical to make one for each course which used case-study material. Second, such programmes may not be necessary if the programmes on a course as a whole adopted some of the design features and production techniques we have mentioned earlier. Third, and perhaps most important, both the D302 and D203 programmes looked at how an earlier programme on the course was made, and how this influenced the validity and reliability of television material. This aspect of at least D302, and probably also of D203, was very successful. D302 TV2 was even more ambitious though in that it tried to show students how they could have used a major theoretical concept (ideology) to analyse the programme material. In this, D302, TV2 was less successful, suggesting that the integration of theoretical concepts with programme material is much more difficult to do, even with a second, follow-up, programme. Once again, therefore, we are led to the conclusion that although such programmes can be valuable, it would still be better to concentrate on designing case-study programmes and courses so that such programmes would be unnecessary. At the same time, we believe that in any remake of D101, much more consideration might be given to using some of the programmes deliberately to develop student learning skills in the use of television material. It is also something that the T101 course team might like to consider, given the frequent use of television for case-study material in certain Technology courses.

Finally, we come to the role of the tutor. Tutors, we believe, have a vital role to play in developing students' skills in using television case-study material. Unfortunately, however, what evidence we have (from CT4 data, from the E221, TV3 evaluation, and from personal contact with tutors when showing programmes to students) suggests that tutors have just as much difficulty, if not more, in handling case-study programmes than the students. This is not surprising, since most tutors do not have previous experience in using integrated multi-media teaching. We know that at least a minority of tutors are not well-disposed to television, seeing it as being irrelevant, or in some cases a threat to their own function. We need therefore to alert tutors to the need to take seriously such a use of television, and also to develop in tutors the skills we require of students.

In conjunction with Regional Tutorial Services and the BBC, we hope eventually to develop a briefing and training programme for part-time tutors on the use of broadcasting; case-study material and its use will feature prominently in any such programme. Because of the size of the problem, and our own uncertainty of the best way to proceed, we are tackling this issue slowly and cautiously, building on experience already developed in the regions. In the meantime, there are one or two approaches which might be explored by regional staff and course teams for improving students' use of such programmes.

We have mentioned earlier that in conventional teaching, case-studies are nearly always used in a group situation, and a crucial part of the experience is the debriefing or analysis of experience at the end. Group discussions then of case-study programmes should be invaluable, not only as a means of getting students to analyse what they have seen, but also as a means of reinforcing the contents of the programme through active discussion and involvement immediately afterwards. In particular, students should be encouraged to discuss the programme material in terms of the theoretical concepts it illustrates, and in terms of the reliability and validity of the evidence presented.

There are of course considerable difficulties at the moment in organising such sessions. Most programmes now are broadcast at times when study centres are not open, and in any case, a broadcast programme would not allow the opportunity for students in the group to go over the same material in a programme several times. Course teams however could encourage special day schools, where programme analysis was a major part of the day's work. If there is a summer school, this too could provide the time and opportunity for such activities.

In either case, replay facilities would be essential, so that programmes can be seen at the time of the session. In addition, the ability to stop, and go over a section of the programme, is invaluable in such sessions. If the national VCR scheme goes ahead in 1978, it should be much easier to arrange such sessions in the regions. If it does not, there are several alternatives. Host institutions or other educational institutions with appropriate replay facilities (Sony $\frac{3}{4}$", Philips $\frac{1}{2}$", National $\frac{1}{2}$") are often willing to lend or hire equipment. Cassettes can be copied and borrowed, on request to Audio-Visual Services at Walton Hall. In most areas, there are firms which will hire out for the day a cassette recorder, monitor, and a technician to set up the equipment (approximate cost: £15 to £20). Cassette machines can be borrowed from the University's Summer School warehouse, outside of the summer school session. Some regions already have their own cassette recorders. We believe therefore that most regions could organise appropriate viewing sessions, and that case-study programmes

would be a priority for such sessions.

However, given the work involved, it would be sensible for course teams to indicate to the regions the importance of such sessions, which programmes would be most appropriate for discussion, and some guidelines on how to analyse such material. Personal visits from producers or academics would of course be val uble, as well.

CONCLUSIONS

We have argued that students find it difficult to reap the full potential of case-study programmes, and find it particularly difficult to integrate material from television case-studies with the material contained in correspondence texts. We have tried to explain these difficulties by examining more closely the various dimensions of a "television case-study".

We have found that case-studies can vary along each of at least five different dimensions. We have described these as didactic-open ended; structured-unstructured; active-passive; neutral-polemical; and integrated-free-standing. The choice of a particular style of case-study programme tends in practice to be rather arbitrary, and so we suggest that course teams ought to make a conscious decision about what kind of case-study approach they want for each programme. This decision should be determined by the extent to which students will have developed prior skills in the use of case-study material. The less experience students have in using television case-studies, the more the programmes should begin at the didactic, structured, active, neutral and integrated ends of the various dimensions. We would however like to see students progressively weaned away from this kind of approach, until at the end of a third of fourth level course, they can handle a wide variety of programmes, including those which are open-ended, unstructured, polemical or free-standing.

We have suggested that the main academic justifications for television case-studies could be two-fold. The cases being studied may be of intrinsic value in themselves - they may, in effect, be major content areas, with which students should be familiar. More generally, however, television case-studies will be used to develop learning skills, particularly of a higher order, such as the interpretation and analysis of phenomena, through the application of theoretical and abstract concepts to such phenomena.

We believe that course teams should be much more specific about the academic

justification or purpose of television case-study programmes, in terms of the learning skills to be developed, before programme production begins, and that in particular more thought needs to be given to exactly how students could use and integrate case-study material in their studies. Because of the unpredictability of the material that will be collected, and because of the way editing and selection of material for inclusion imposes a meaning on the film material, it is crucial that the academic should be very closely involved at all stages of production. Ideally, examples of how students could use the case-study material should be worked out, and perhaps circulated to tutors for guidance. Certainly, course teams should explain to students why a case-study approach has been adopted, and how students will be expected to approach such material.

We have argued that students need to develop a variety of skills for making full use of television studies, and that the onus for developing such skills should fall on the programmes themselves, rather than on extended supplementary material or structural tinkering with the course. At the same time, carefully designed broadcast notes, special programmes showing students how to analyse case-study material, and appropriate tutorial back-up are nevertheless likely to be invaluable, if not essential.

Our concern at the apparent difficulty of many case-study programmes in achieving academic objectives should not be misunderstood. It is quite likely that we have under-measured the impact of case-study programmes, a difficulty faced by all concerned with measuring learning. Our methods may not be adequate for finding out what students have really learned, or we may have measured only short-term rather than long-term effects. We know for instance that the Examining Board for DE351 ("People and Work") were pleased with the intelligent use made by students of television case-study material in their examination answers. Nevertheless, we are confident that assumptions made by producers and academics about what students will get from case-study programmes will generally be over-optimistic. It is interesting to note that 23 years ago, the BBC Audience Research Department carried out a study on how much was comprehended by listeners from a regular series of radio talks on the Light Programme. To quote from Silvey:[19]

"The report on the experiment showed that the average listener to Topic for Thought could only answer 28 per cent of the questions correctly ... The trouble seemed to be of three kinds. First, there was an evident tendency for broadcasters to over-estimate learners' background knowledge of the subject ... Second, the talks which fared least well were those where the listener was left to sort out the principal points for himself or where there was no obvious straightforward progression of ideas. Third, there were vocabulary difficulties - broadcasters too often used words which their listeners simply did not understand."

Given the difference between a radio talk and a television case-study, these comments are nevertheless very similar in kind to ones we have been making, quite independently, about many case-study programmes.

This does not mean though that we think the use of television for case-studies is mistaken. Quite the opposite. In many of our courses, the television programmes provide students with their only opportunity for developing the higher order learning skills of application of theoretical concepts, and the analysis of real-world phenomena, as distinct from reproducing and regurgitating correspondence texts and set reading. Thus television case-studies can play a vital part in developing the abilities one expects to find in University graduates.

Because we have been appointed to research into audio-visual media, we have obviously concentrated in our analysis on television programmes. One wonders though what the results would be if a similar analysis were to be applied to the effectiveness of our texts as teaching devices, especially for developing higher order learning skills, and we sincerely wish that it was possible to place this paper in the context of similar studies on other parts of the Open University system.

Similarly, we hope the points we have made will not be used as an excuse to return to "old-fashioned telling" or illustrated lectures. Nor do we want to see a standardised style of programme production for case-studies. There should be as much variety in programme style and as much innovation and creativity as possible. But we do think this should be harnessed to, or at least take account of, the way our students learn, and it may be necessary, rather than to adopt a broad reproduction of general broadcasting styles, to develop a style of design and production which is unique to the Open University; a style of production which combines the best of documentary with the best of teaching practice.

Lastly, as we have written this paper, it has become even more obvious to us that there is much more still to be discussed and learned about how best to use television for case-study material. We hope this contribution will be seen then as no more than one small part of the debate, but one which perhaps may help to clarify some of the thinking in this important area of Open University teaching.

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